

House, at Ground Zero in New York City, and all across the country once again remind us that there is more that unites us than divides us. We are all, at the core, proud Americans. If we can learn anything from recent events, it is that America is strong and resilient. If we stay dedicated to our efforts, we can get our country back on track.

Fueled with the feedback I heard from my neighbors during 2 weeks at home in northeastern Pennsylvania, I am ready to keep fighting for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Monsignor Craig Harrison, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Bakersfield, California, offered the following prayer:

Gracious and loving God, we are grateful for the gifts and blessings You have shown our Nation.

Be with those who are suffering the devastation of the great storms that we have experienced and help us as a Nation to respond.

Bless the women and men gathered here who are called to protect and serve the people of the United States. Watch over and bless all those who serve our Nation abroad.

Guide the Members of this Congress, that their work today will reflect Your love and compassion and guide our Nation to be a leader in justice and peace.

We pray this in the name of the one who created us in love. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SIREs led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING MONSIGNOR CRAIG HARRISON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome Monsignor Craig Harrison from Bakersfield, California, and appreciate that he was able to be here today to open up our floor session with the invocation. It is great to have a fellow Bakersfield High School Driller here on the floor with me.

Since he returned to Bakersfield in 1999 to be the pastor of his hometown parish, Monsignor Craig has had a profound, positive impact on the lives of the thousands in our community. The fact that the number of families in his parish has increased by over 5,000 and enrollment in the parish school has doubled is a testament to his leadership in our community.

He is more than just a faith leader. He is an author of a children's book, he is a faith leader to many of us throughout the community, and, on a personal note, he was a faith leader to my father as he battled his fight with cancer.

Monsignor Craig is a true friend to the Bakersfield community, and I appreciate that he was able to share his words of wisdom on the House floor.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARDNER). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

U.S. FIREFIGHTERS GO TO MEXICO AND FLY OVER TEXAS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the administration is fighting wildfires. In December, the United States sent two firefighting planes to battle fires in Israel. In April, two specially equipped U.S. Air Force C-130 cargo planes and 30 personnel were sent to battle wildfires in Mexico. The fires in Mexico burned about 380 square miles near the Texas border. The United States came to the rescue.

But not everyone gets help from the United States. A wildfire epidemic has also occurred in Texas, with more than 9,000 fires. Two million acres have been burned. That is the size of Rhode Island and Delaware combined and ten times the size of the fires in Mexico. And the State is still on fire.

Texas Governor Perry requested Federal help, but the administration summarily denied the Governor's request. The administration, it seems, is more concerned about taking care of foreign

nations while ignoring Americans in Texas. Why does the administration despise Texas? Meanwhile, the fires continue.

And that's just the way it is.

CONDEMNING THE DEATH OF JUAN WILFREDO SOTO

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the brutal beating and subsequent death of Juan Wilfredo Soto. Last Thursday, Soto, while participating in a peaceful protest against the Castro regime, Cuban authorities beat him so badly that he was later taken to the hospital, where he died.

Soto was a brave man and a respected advocate who helped support the hunger strikes of human rights award winner Guillermo Farinas.

Juan Wilfredo Soto's death is the latest brazen illustration of the violent methods the Castro brothers utilize to oppress freedom in Cuba. In the last 2 months reports of oppression have increased.

As many praised the false promises of the Sixth Communist Party Congress held in Cuba last month, few acknowledged the crackdown on dissidents and journalists that took place. Prior to the congress, Cuban authorities reportedly arrested and detained opposition members to ensure that all voices critical to the regime would be silent and that no protests would be visible.

The United States and the international community must join together in condemning the wrongful death of Juan Wilfredo Soto and supporting human rights on the island. We must show Cuban leaders that their brutality is not going to go unnoticed.

MAJORITY'S PLAN FOR MEDICARE IS THE WRONG APPROACH

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, if the majority's plan for Medicare ever becomes law, seniors will lose their guaranteed benefit and get a private insurance voucher.

Seniors are calling. They are nervous and justified in asking all sorts of questions about the plan, such as: Will the voucher cover me if I get sick? Will the voucher result in rationed care? And will I need to pay more out of pocket?

The Congressional Budget Office says seniors will pay more—much more. Out-of-pocket costs to seniors will double in 2022 and rise by 68 percent by 2030.

This massive cost shifting saves the Federal Government a lot of money. And where does all of the money taken from seniors and Medicare go? Well, it doesn't pay off the debt. It doesn't create jobs or help folks pay for gas or groceries. But it does go to finance large new tax cuts for the most well-off.